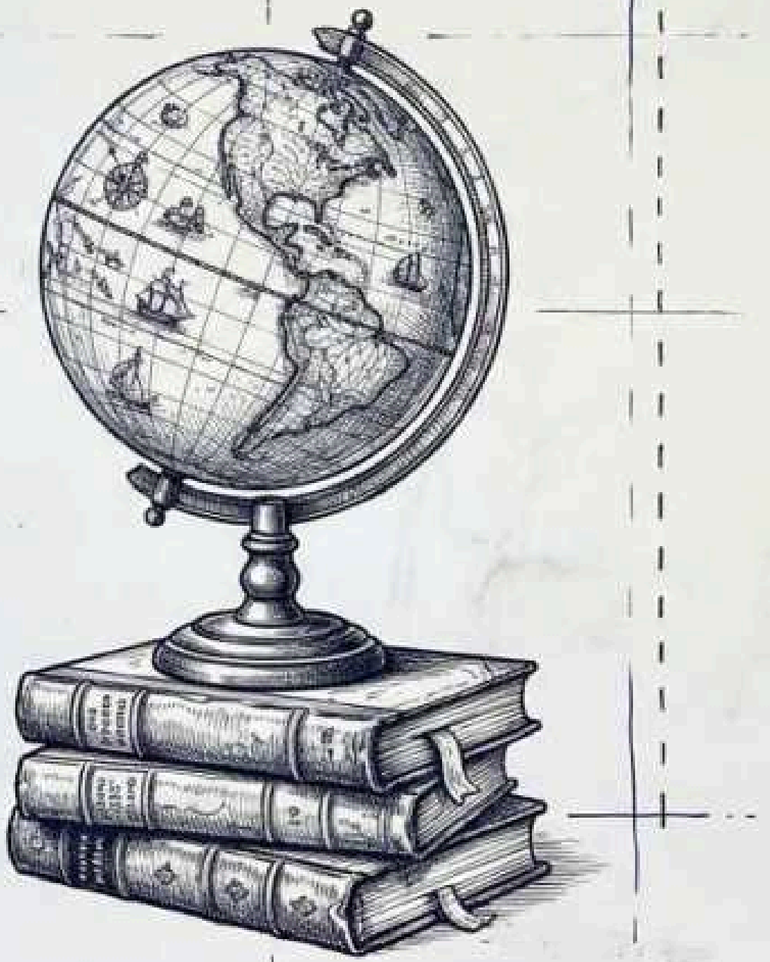
¶6.1

Our Connected World and How Historians Think

HIST 102 B — Lecture 6



¶ 6.2

Part 1:

The World Since 1991

1991 → Present

- Globalization
- Climate
- Tech
- Pandemic

Part 2:

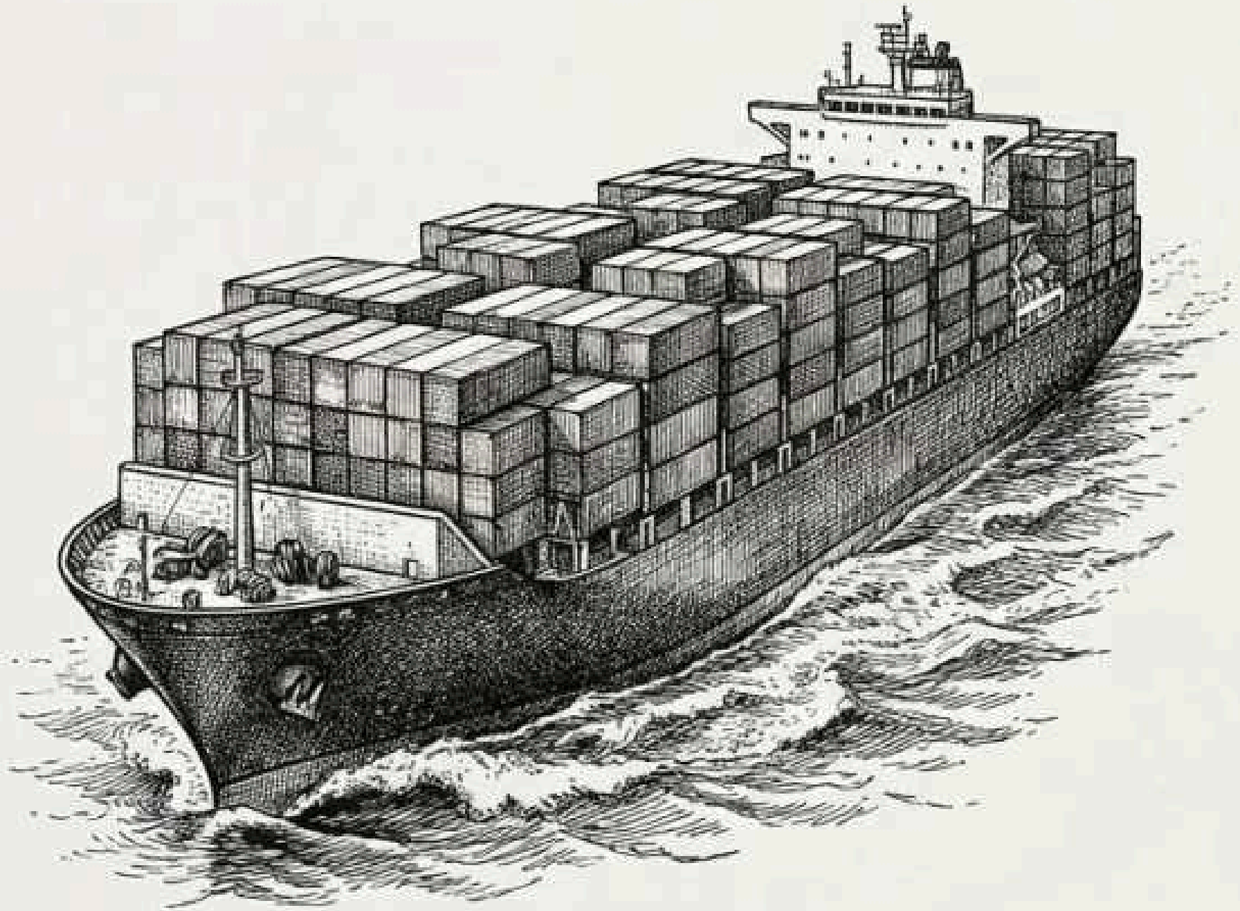
How Historians Think



- Evaluating Claims
- Bias
- Sources

Goal: Judge claims about the past & present for yourself.

Global Integration = Δ(↑Trade + ↑Travel + ↑Finance)



Catalysts: Containerization, cheaper air travel, trade agreements.

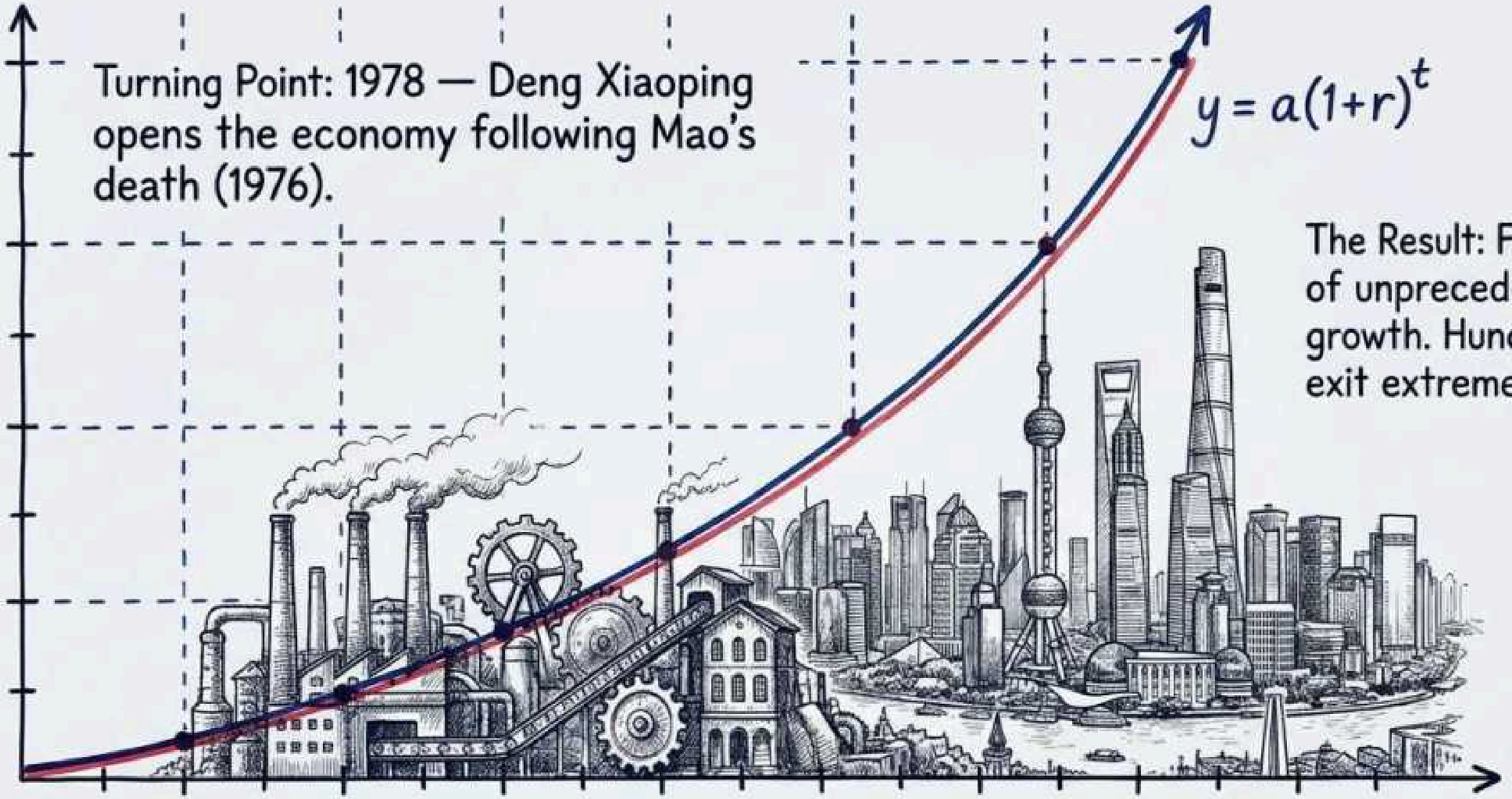
Milestone: World Trade Organization (WTO) created in 1995.

(+)	(−)
Lifted millions from poverty.	Hurt specific workers/communities; sparked ongoing fairness debates.

¶ 6.4

Turning Point: 1978 — Deng Xiaoping opens the economy following Mao's death (1976).

$y = a(1+r)^t$



The Result: Four decades of unprecedented historic growth. Hundreds of millions exit extreme poverty.

[Leading global power in manufacturing & tech] ⇔ [Government maintains tight political control]

The Modern Paradox

India's Catalyst: 1991 economic reforms

↳ Rapid growth, leadership in software services, now the world's most populous country.

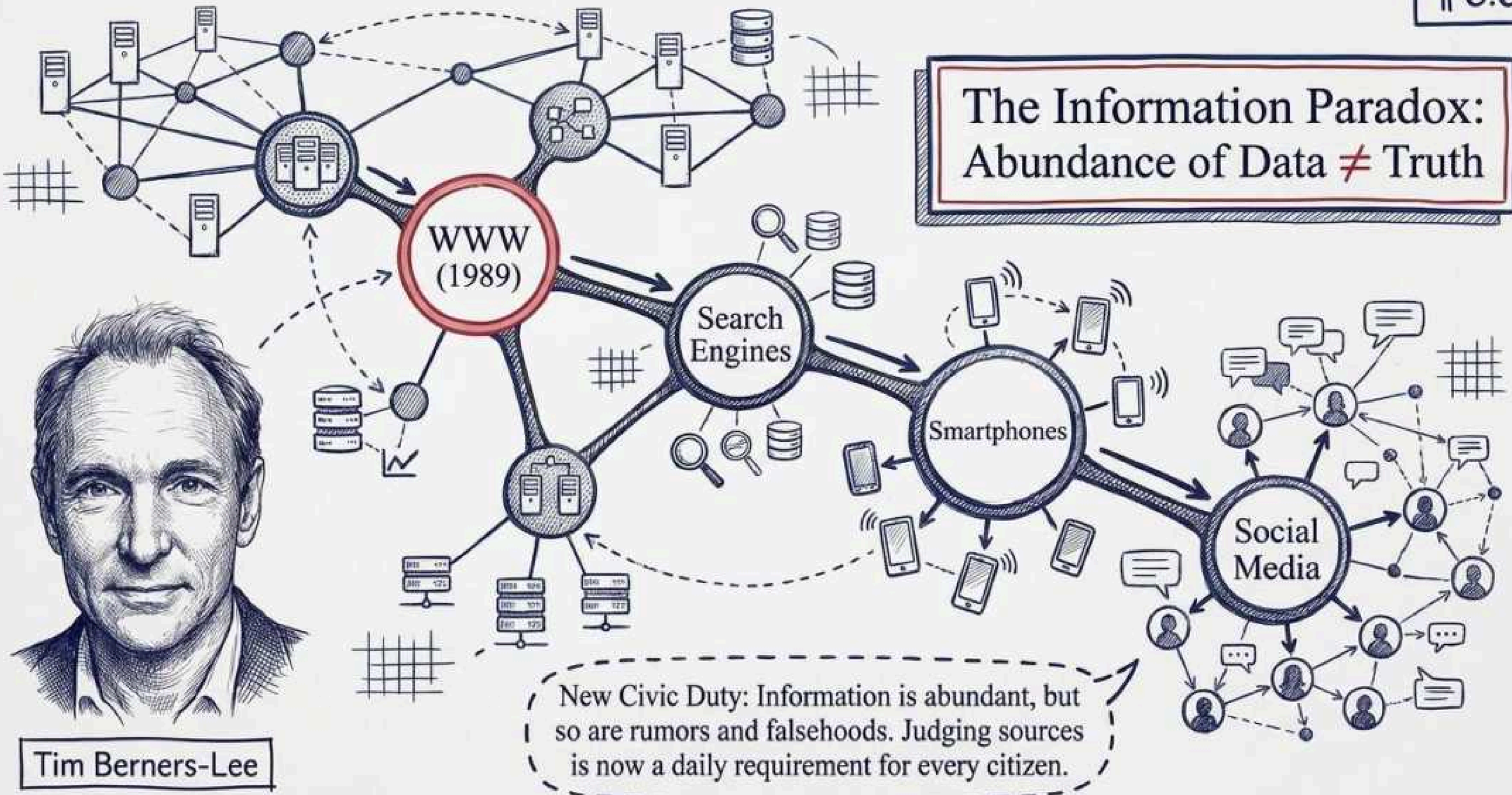


The Global South: Accelerated development across Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

⟺ **Historical Reversion**: Economic gravity is returning to Asia, where it stood before the age of industrial empires.

¶6.6

The Information Paradox: Abundance of Data ≠ Truth



¶ 6.7



1990s: Yugoslavia wars & Rwanda genocide (1994) — showing the limits of international action

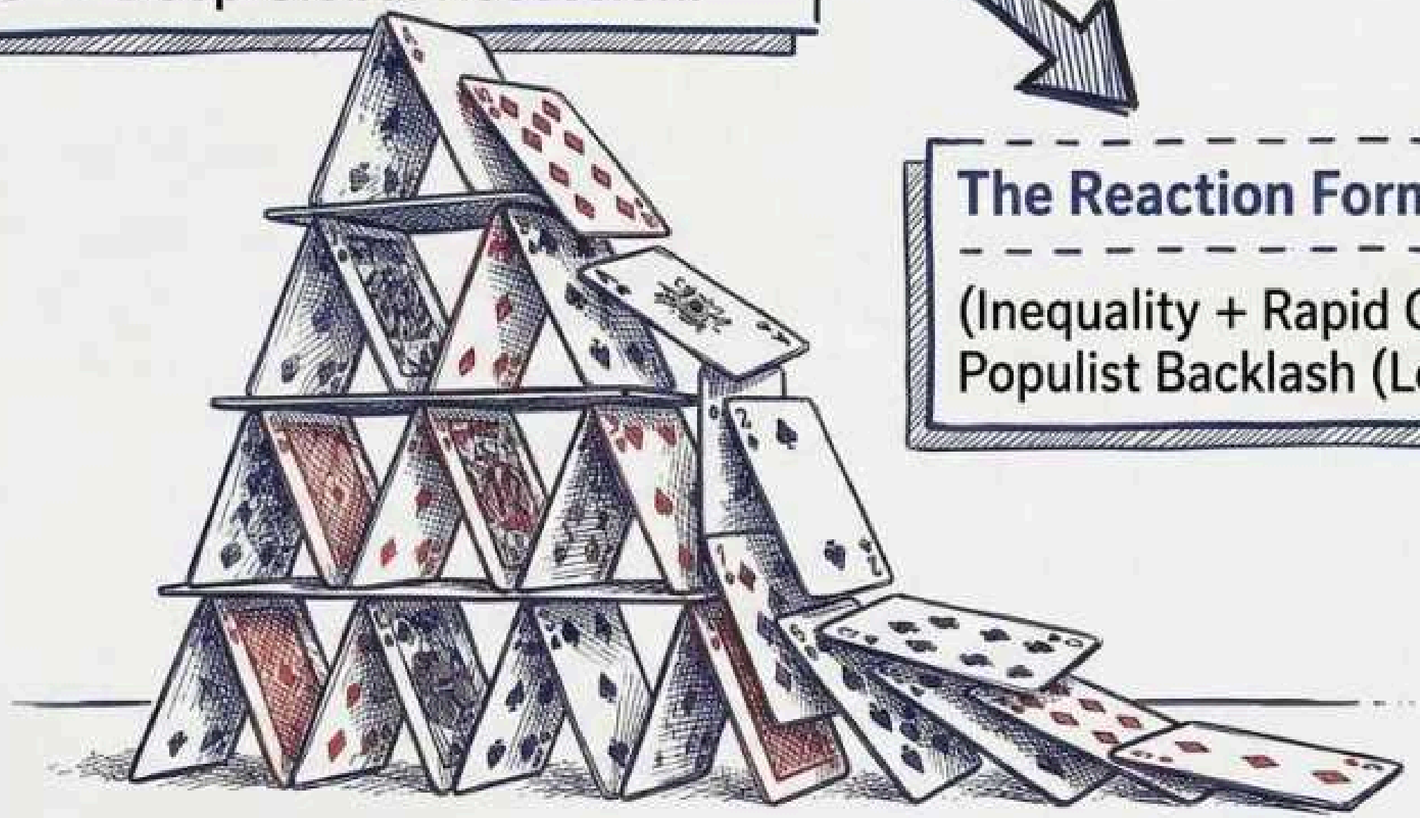
2000s: September 11 (2001) attacks → US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq

2010s: Arab uprisings (2011) and subsequent civil wars

2020s: Russia launches full invasion of Ukraine (2022)

¶ 6.8

Trigger (2008): US Housing Market Crisis → Global Financial Crisis → Deep Global Recession.



The Reaction Formula:

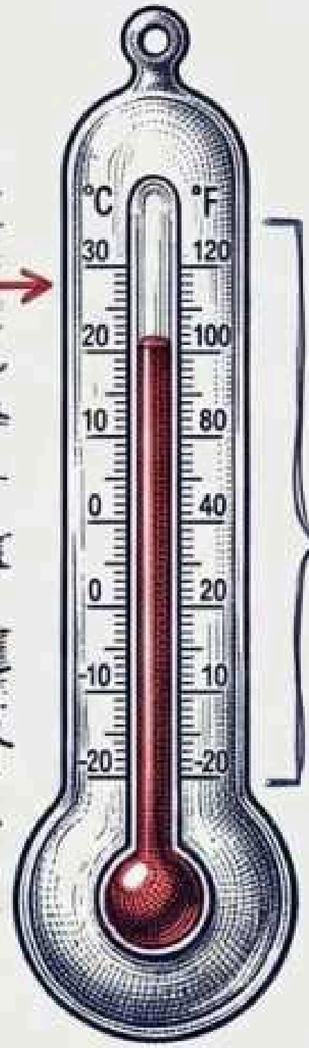
(Inequality + Rapid Change) = Populist Backlash (Left & Right)

Milestone Event: Britain votes for Brexit (2016).

Methodological Caution: Historians are too close in time to these events; profound caution is required in our analysis.

¶ 6.9





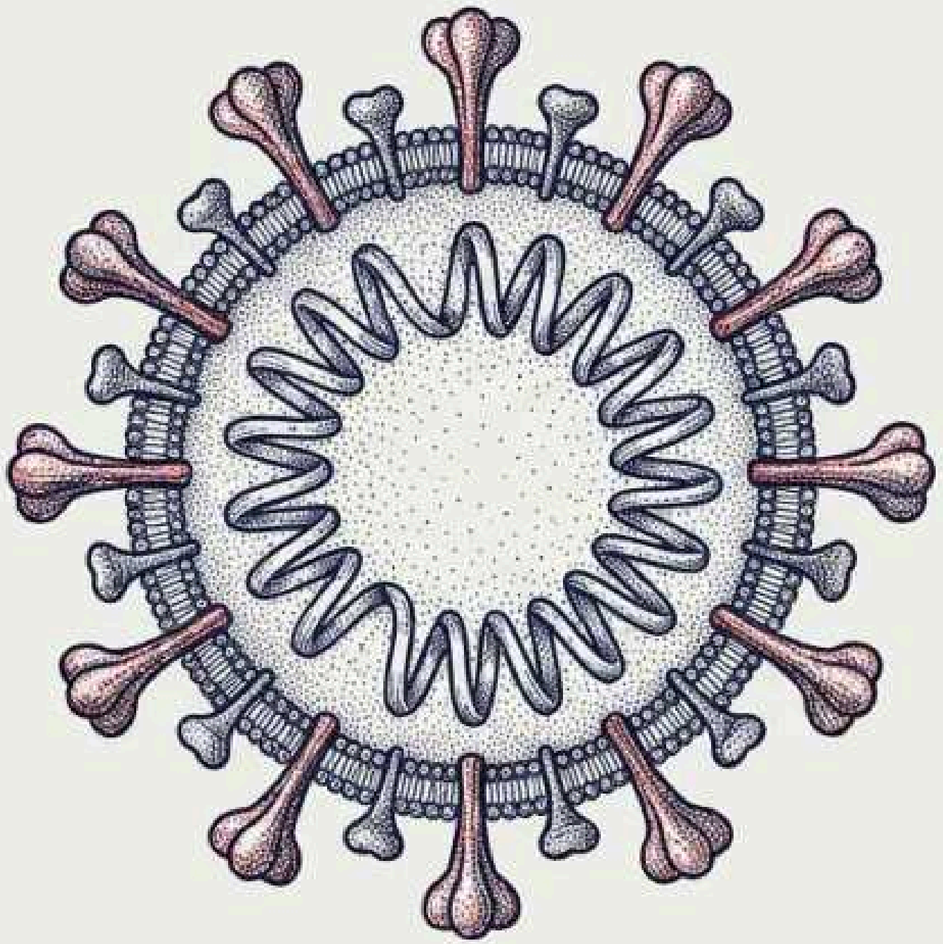
The Metric:

$\Delta T_{global} > +1° C$ (since late 19th century).

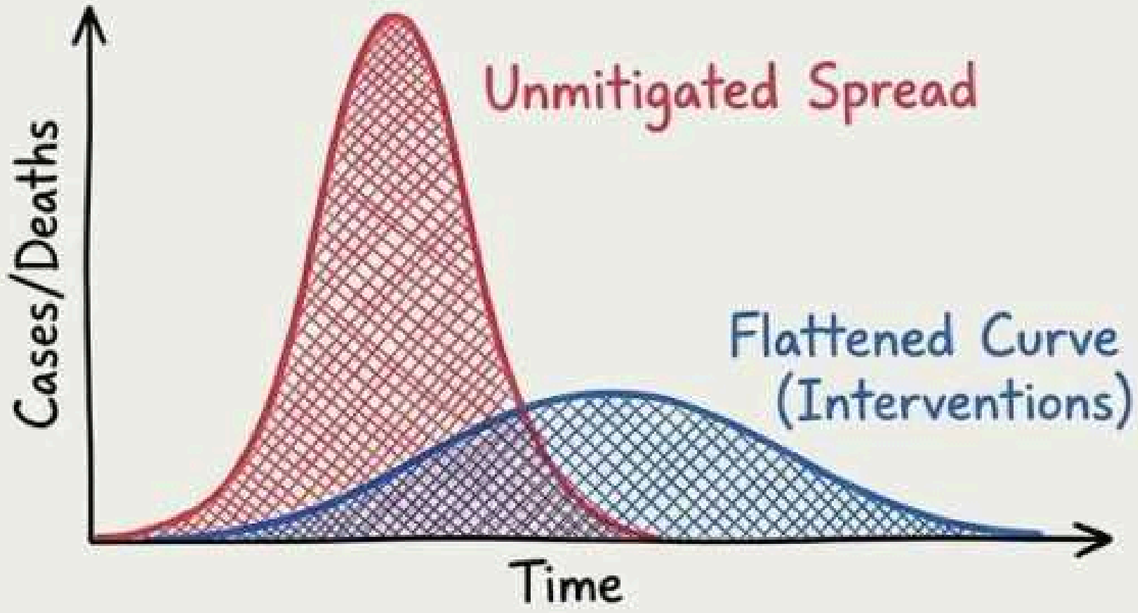
- **Drivers:** Burning coal, oil, and gas.
- **Threats:** Rising seas, heat waves, shifting rainfall patterns.

Response vs. Reality: Paris Agreement (2015) set emission goals, but dp/dt (rate of progress) remains **slower** than expert consensus demands.

¶ 6.10



Impact (2020): Millions dead, borders closed, massive economic contraction.



Scientific Triumph: Vaccines developed in under one year.

Historical Echo: Echoes ancient plagues. Spread relied on global trade routes; impact depended entirely on existing social inequality and public choices.

¶ 6.11

Population Shift: 1.5 Billion (1900) → 8 Billion (2022).



↑ Life expectancy

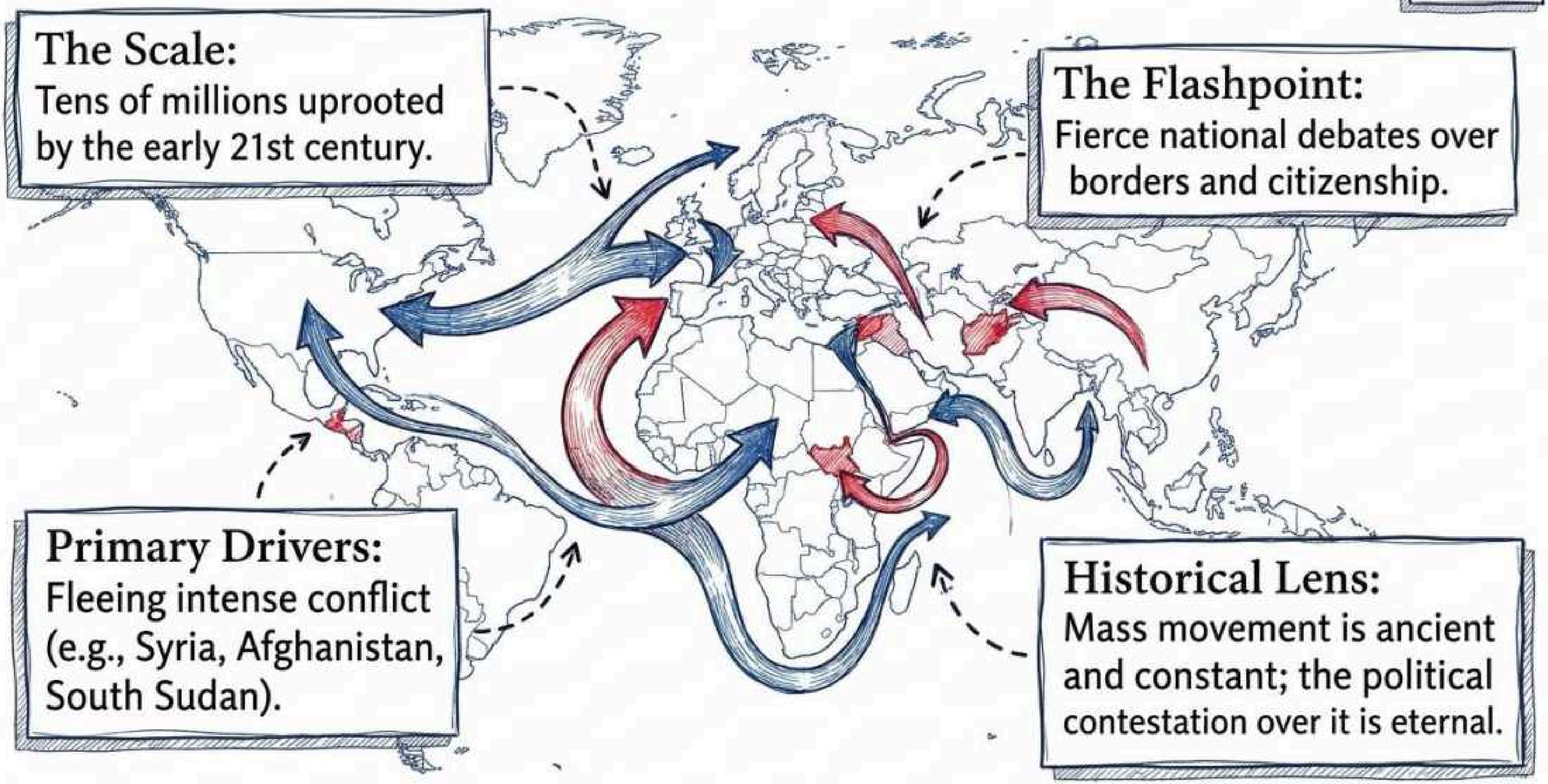
↑ Literacy

↑ Child survival



Persistent Deficits: Vast inequality persists within/between nations.

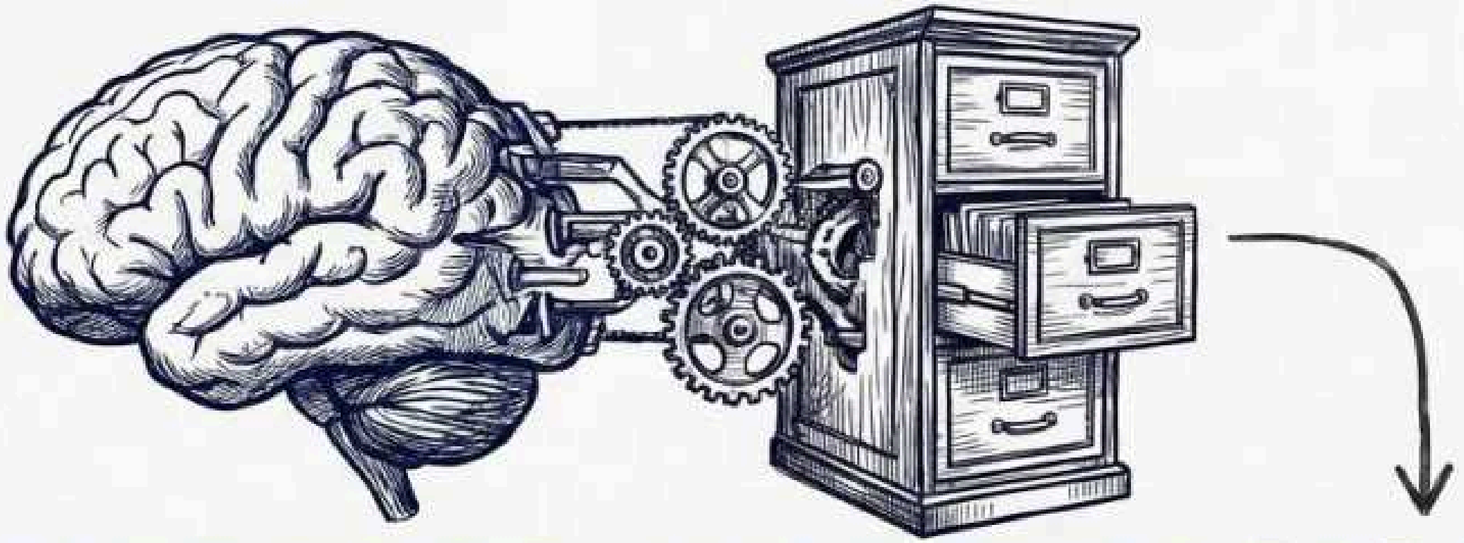
Ongoing Frontlines: Struggles for the rights of women, minorities, and migrants continue.


The Scale:
Tens of millions uprooted by the early 21st century.
The Flashpoint:
Fierce national debates over borders and citizenship.
Primary Drivers:
Fleeing intense conflict (e.g., Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan).
Historical Lens:
Mass movement is ancient and constant; the political contestation over it is eternal.

¶ 6.13

Step 1: Start with Questions.

Step 2: Gather Sources.



Primary Sources

Primary Sources (The Raw Data): Letters, laws, photos, diaries (created at the exact time studied).

Secondary Sources

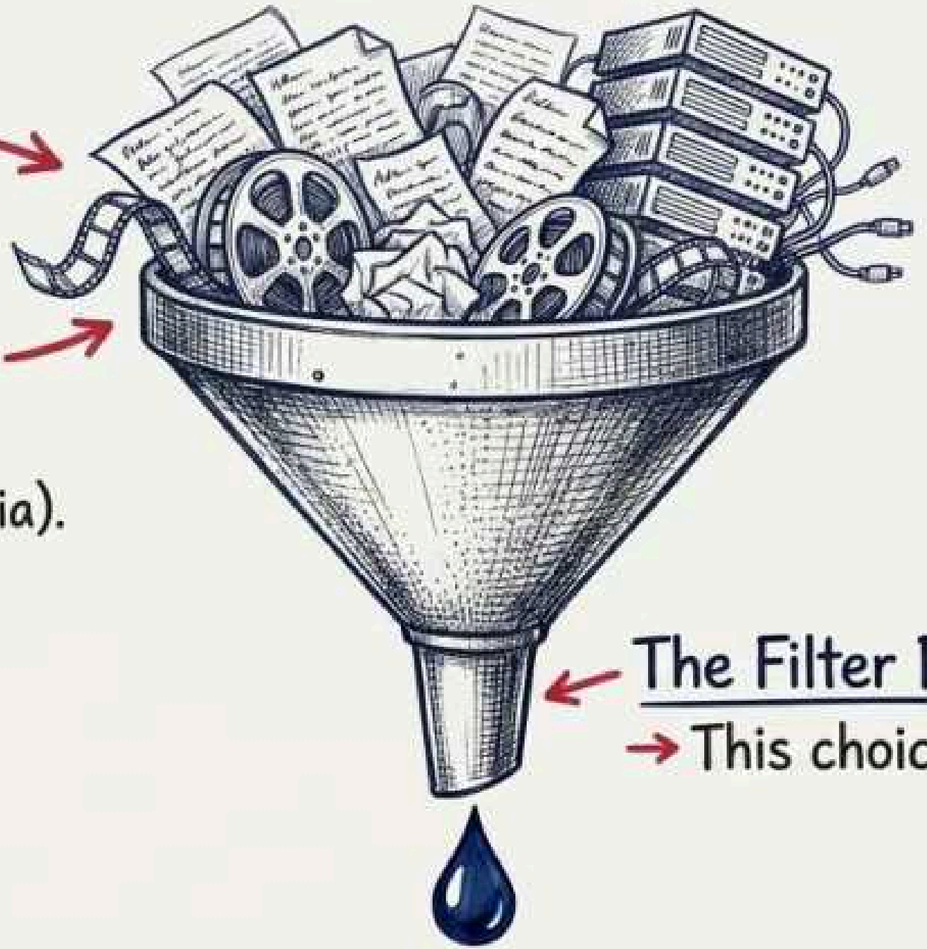
(The Interpretation): Interpretation): Textbooks and later writings that interpret the primary data.

The Historian's Whiteboard

¶ 6.14

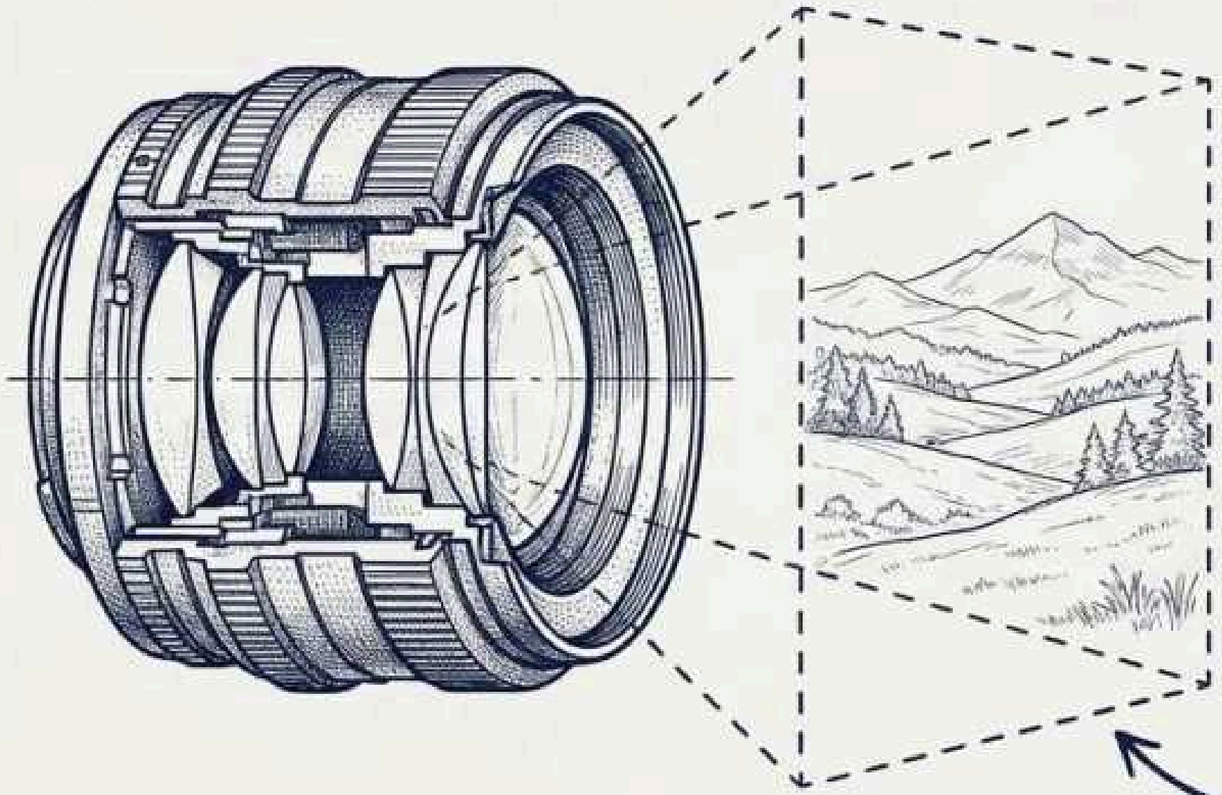
Distant Past:
Sources are scarce.

20th Century & Beyond:
Overwhelming noise
(News, files, films, social media).



The Filter Point: Historians MUST select
→ This choice inherently shapes the story.

The Void: Archives can be closed, kept secret, or burned.
Silence in the record demands explanation.



Core Axiom: No source is neutral.

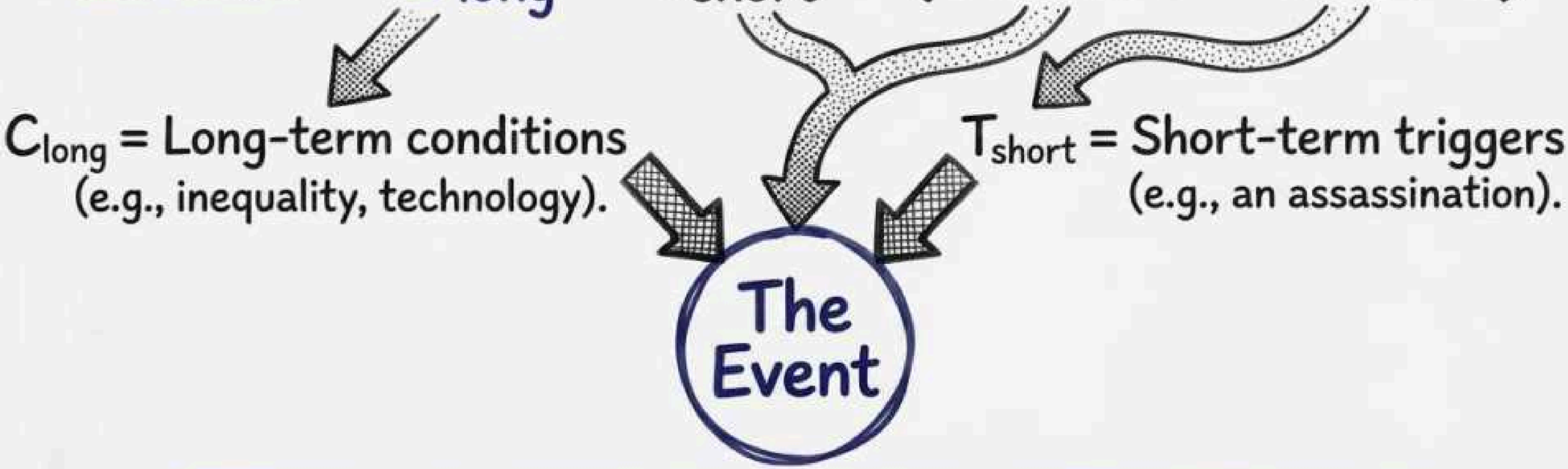
(Governments hide failure, news serves owners, diaries are subjective).

- ☑ The Interrogation Protocol:
  - — Who made it?
  - — Why? For whom?
  - — What is omitted?
- ☑ The Method:
  - — Compare disagreeing sources.

Optical Warning: Even photos and films mislead—they only show what was inside the frame.

The Hardest Task: Explaining why events happen.

Event = C_{long} + T_{short} + (Chance × Choice)



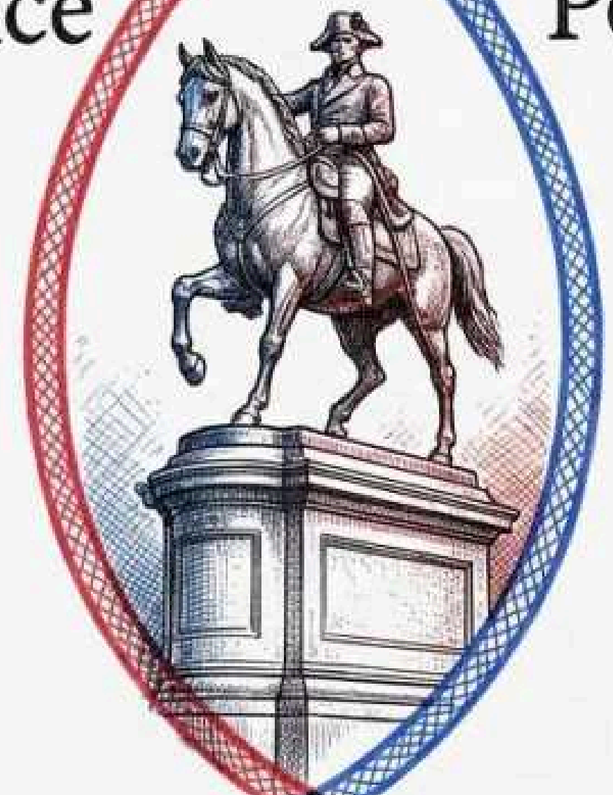
Warning: Single-cause stories are dangerously simple.
Always ask: What else mattered?

¶ 6.17

History / Evidence

Memory / Politics

The Historian's Duty: Allegiance is to the evidence, even when findings upset a cherished national story.



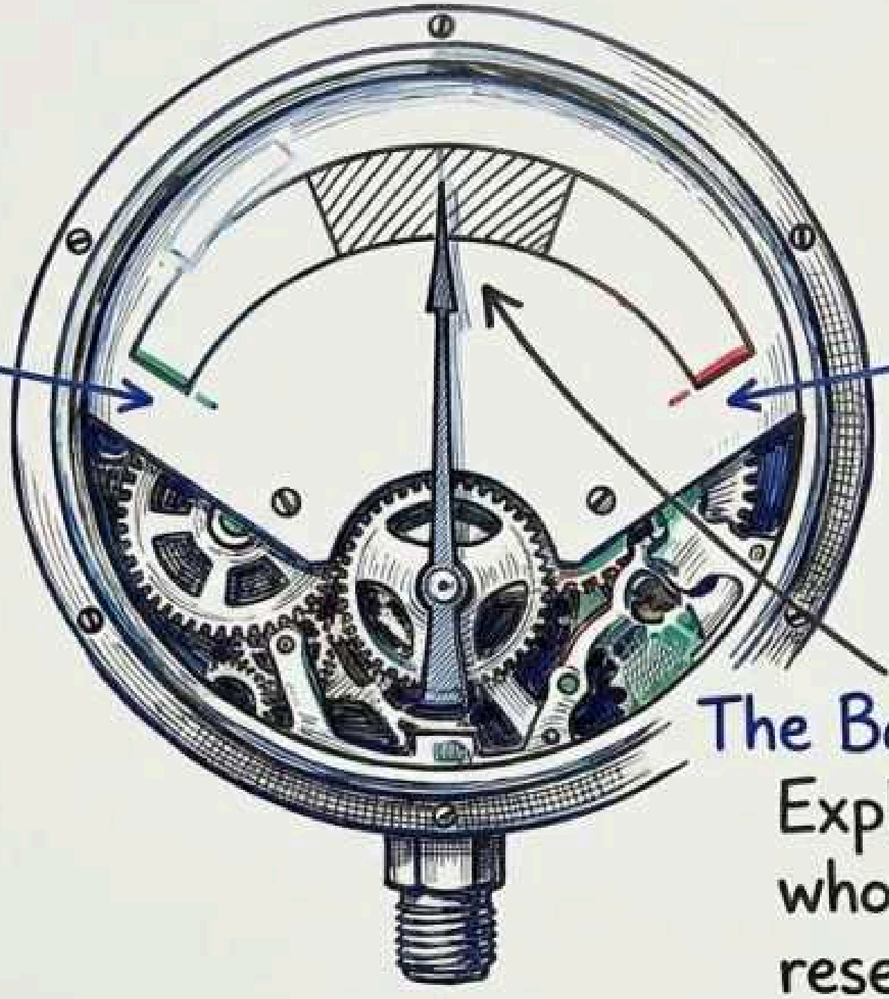
The Nature of Memory: Memory is political. Nations curate stories, honor specific events, and intentionally forget others (monuments, textbooks, anniversaries).

The Standard: Present the best versions of competing views fairly.

¶ 6.18

Error 1 (Presentism)

Judging the past only by today's standards.



Error 2 (Relativism)

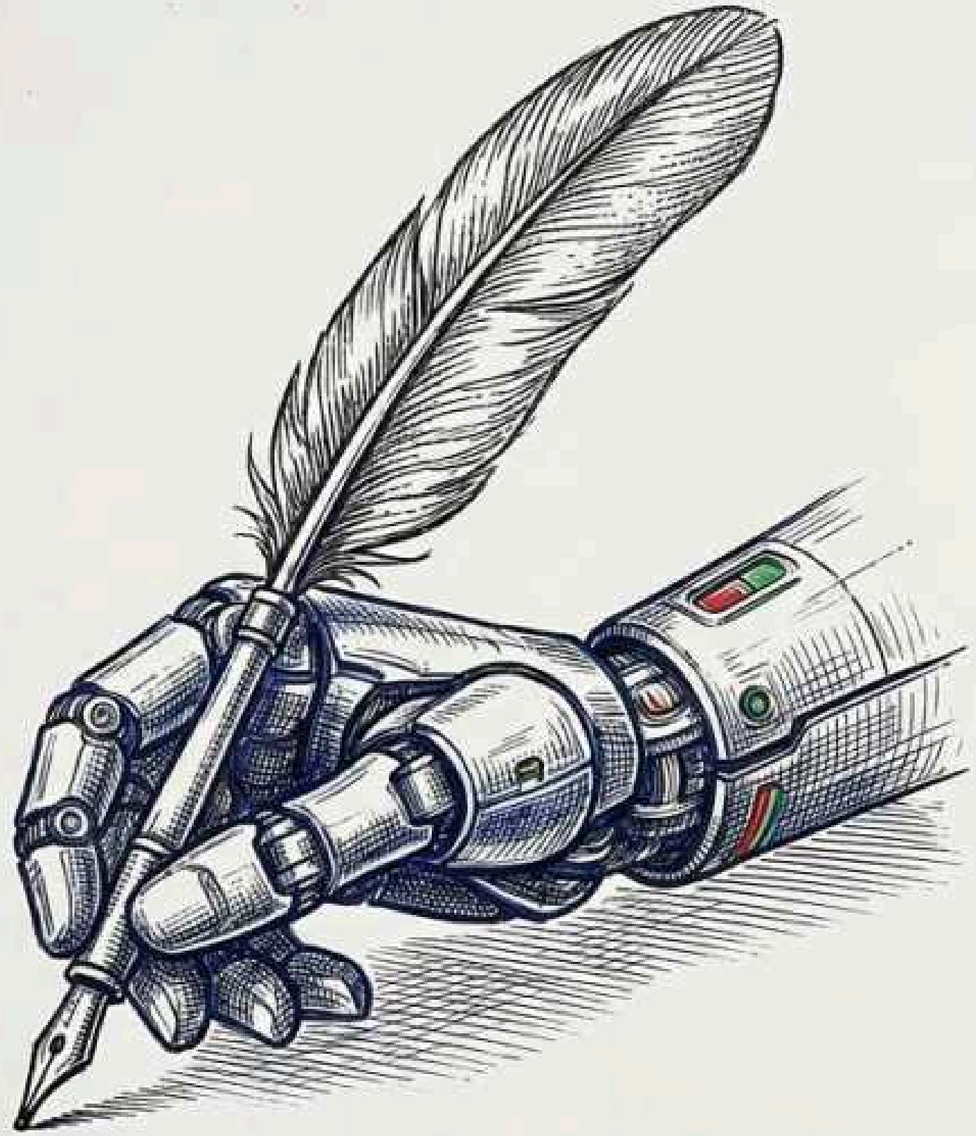
Assuming atrocities were just normal for their time.

The Balance Point:

Explain why they acted, note who objected back then, and reserve the right to judge.

The Final Check: Always ask whose story is missing (women, workers, colonized peoples, the poor).

¶ 6.19



Course Context: This course was built with AI assistance—an ideal place to practice these habits.

- [x] 1. Request the AI tutor's sources.
- [x] 2. Look those specific sources up.
- [x] 3. Cross-check key facts against reliable books and archives.

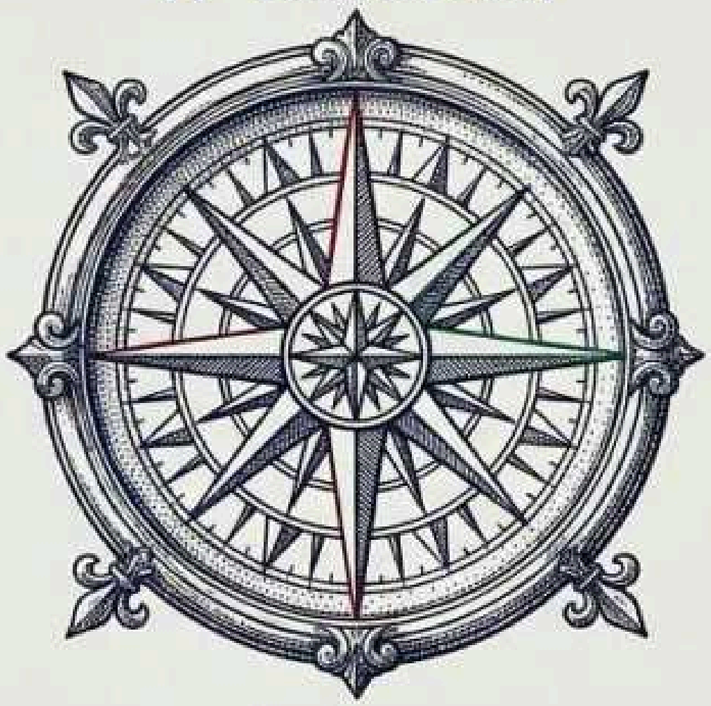
"A tool that writes smoothly can still be wrong."

¶ 6.20

The Journey: From the age of oceanic empires to the interconnected today.

N: Connection

W: Human Choices



E: Ideas

S: Power

History does not repeat, but it gives us questions to ask.

Questions or feedback: garyanderson@mail.grokbot.com | X: @garyanderson | Anderson Academy